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THE FATEFUL YEARS: KESARIA DURING THE GENOCIDE

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The Armenian population in the *sanjak* (county) of Kayseri (Kesaria; Gesaria) prior to World War I totaled between 47,500¹ and 52,000, including 18,900 in Kesaria city.² Across the *vilayet* or province of Angora (Ankara), which consisted of four *sanjaks*, Armenians totaled nearly 136,000 before the outbreak of World War I, including 58,611 in the *sanjak* of Yozghat (Yozgat), with 49,794 in the area of Yozghat-Boghazliyan; 20,858 in the *sanjak* of Angora, including 11,319 in Angora city; and 4,400 in Kirsehir *sanjak*.³ Although located outside the boundaries of the

¹ Teodik, *Amenun taretsuytse, 1922* [Everyone's Almanac, 1922] (Constantinople: M. Hovakimian, 1922), p. 262. Ottoman population statistics prior to the deportations identified a total of 47,617 Armenians in the *sanjak* of Kayseri for "relocation." See T.C. Genelkurmay Başkanlığı, Genelkurmay askerî tarih ve stratejik etüt [General Staff Military History and Strategic Studies] *Arşiv belgeleriyle Ermeni faaliyetleri, 1914-1918* [Armenian Activities in Archival Documents, 1914-1918], vol. 1 (Ankara: Genelkurmay Basım Evi, 2005), p. 147, cited hereafter as ATASE.

² See Raymond H. Kévorkian and Paul B. Paboudjian, *Les Arméniens dans l'empire Ottoman à la veille du génocide* (Paris: Les Editions d'Art et d'Histoire ARHIS, 1992), pp. 58, 218. See also Raymond H. Kévorkian, *Le Génocide des Arméniens* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 2006), p. 640. While Kévorkian and Paboudjian, in *Les Arméniens dans l'empire Ottoman*, show 136,000 as the total number of Armenians in Angora vilayet in 1914, Kévorkian, in *Le Génocide des Arméniens*, mentions 105,869 (p. 619). In the English translation of this work, "cent cinq mille huit cent soixante-neuf" is incorrectly translated as "105,169." See Raymond H. Kévorkian, *The Armenian Genocide: A Complete History* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2011), p. 495.

³ Kévorkian and Paboudjian, *Les Arméniens dans l'empire Ottoman*, p. 58. According to Ottoman population statistics, the Armenian population in Angora vilayet (excluding Kesaria *sanjak*) totaled 47,224. See ATASE, vol. 1, p. 147.

eastern "six Armenian vilayets" of the Ottoman Empire, the Armenians of Kesaria and its neighboring districts also became victims of various forms of persecution under the Young Turk regime, contrary to its promises for democratization and liberalization. The ultranationalist wing of the Young Turks led by the triumvirate of the Ittihad ve Terakki (Committee of Union and Progress; CUP), Mehmed Talaat, Ismail Enver, and Ahmed Jemal, consolidated power after a military coup of January 1913. Shortly thereafter, xenophobic chauvinism among Turkish political leaders and the public at large eventually culminated in the genocidal policies of the Young Turk regime during World War I.

Reforms and the Armenian Question

Beginning with the *Tanzimat* (Reorganization) reforms during the reign of Sultan Abdul Mejid (1839-61), the Ottoman government promised various civil, political, and administrative improvements; however, the primary objective of such reforms being the reversal of the empire's decline and the preservation of its territorial integrity, the government lacked the political will to execute the Tanzimat reforms. Nor did the government demonstrate a political will to implement the fundamental structural reforms envisioned in the Ottoman Constitution of 1876, promulgated by Sultan Abdul Hamid II (1876-1908/09). On paper, the Constitution established a parliamentary government, with guarantees for civil and political rights and equality before the law. Rather than implement the promised reforms, however, the sultan suspended the Constitution in 1878, ostensibly because of the military crisis stemming from the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78.⁴

⁴ The Tanzimat reforms included the *Hatt-i Sherif of Gulhané* (Noble Rescript of the Rose Chamber), November 3, 1839, and the *Hatt-i Humayun* (Imperial Rescript), February 18, 1856. See Hagop Barsoumian, "The Eastern Question and the Tanzimat Era," in *The Armenian People from Ancient to Modern Times*, vol. 2: *Foreign Dominion to Statehood, The Fifteenth Century to the Twentieth Century*, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), pp. 175-201. See also Arshak Alpoyachian [Arshag Alboyajian], *Patmutiun Hay Kesario* [History of Armenian Kesaria], 2 vols. (Cairo: Kesario ev Shrkayits Hayrenaktsakan Miutiun, 1937), vol. 1, pp. 630-68.

The Ottoman *millet* system, founded upon principles of Islamic law, delineated the legal and administrative boundaries of the various ethno-religious communities. The Armenian millet, while enjoying a certain degree of autonomy in internal affairs, was nevertheless relegated to a secondary status. The Tanzimat reforms failed to remove the cultural barriers between the Muslim and non-Muslim subjects of the sultan. The barriers not only persisted, but in fact increased as a corollary to the growing virulence of Turkish nationalism. In addition, abuse of authority at all levels of government continued, now coupled with increasing Muslim resentment toward the Christian Armenians and their demands for equality and other reforms.

The failure to implement reforms on the part of the government intensified Armenian distrust toward the sultan and prompted many community leaders to petition foreign powers for diplomatic intervention, while a small number of revolutionary activists relied on armed force to bear pressure on the authorities in the hope of drawing attention to the Armenian plight. For his part, Abdul Hamid reacted with massacres, which during the period of 1894-96 claimed more than 100,000 Armenian lives, including 1,000 in Kesaria in late November 1895.⁵

Fear concerning their physical safety and hopelessness regarding the worsening political and economic condition led Armenians in growing numbers first to move to Constantinople and then to emigrate to Western countries—for example, the United States, where by 1908 about 700 Armenians had arrived from Tomarza, a town in the region of Kesaria.⁶ Conditions across the Armenian communities continued to deteriorate after the Young Turk revolution. In 1911, Armenian deputies in the Ottoman Parliament brought the matter to the attention of policymakers but to no avail. In December of that year, U.S. Ambassador William W. Rockhill reported from Constantinople that the Turkish government had failed to improve the political situation from the Balkans to Anatolia. In Armenia, he wrote:

⁵ Great Britain, Parliamentary Papers, Blue Book, Turkey, No. 2 (1896), p. 247, as cited in Christopher J. Walker, *Armenia: Survival of a Nation* (London: Croom Helm, 1980), p. 161; Cf. Alpayachian, *Patmutiun Hay Kesario*, vol. 2, pp. 1383-88.

⁶ Alpayachian, *Patmutiun Hay Kesario*, vol. 1, p. 863.

I learn that the situation is as bad as in Macedonia; murders of Armenians by Kurds and often of Kurds by Kurds are of daily occurrence, acts of brigandage have increased, while the authorities are showing the supineness as elsewhere. The Armenian Deputies have within the last week deemed it necessary to bring to the attention of the Ottoman Government the seriousness of the condition in Anatolia, and to suggest remedies, but it is to be apprehended that this step will have but little if any effect.⁷

Rockhill warned that "nothing short of a catastrophe must soon overtake the present régime in Turkey."⁸ The State Department's Near East Division, commenting in a memorandum dated December 21, 1911, concurred: "Dissatisfaction with the Government is very acute both at Constantinople and in the provinces, and some upheaval may occur at any moment."

Whether or not this would be in the form of a movement to overthrow the present Government, or a governmentally fostered Moslem movement against some or all Christians, is difficult to foresee, but undoubtedly the fanatical tendencies of a large part of the population are being roused, and it would be strange if some outbreak of Moslems against Christians, native or foreign or both—, did not accompany the upheaval.⁹

U.S. Consul Jesse Jackson reported from Aleppo in November 1912 that the government was determined to take extreme measures, as the martial law it imposed in the district of Marash that year, using the search for Armenian deserters as a pretext, and that the authorities intended to place the Armenians "at the mercy of the Moslems." He warned: "The disastrous results" expected in Marash "under the present strained conditions would spread like wild-fire, and likely engulf Christians of all denominations far and wide."¹⁰

⁷ U.S. National Archives, Record Group 59, File and Document 867.00/358, Rockhill to Secretary of State, Dec. 12, 1911, p. 4.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁹ U.S. National Archives, RG 59, 867.00/357, C.W.F., Division of Near Eastern Affairs, to Secretary of State and Assistant Secretary of State Wilson, Dec. 21, 1911.

¹⁰ U.S. National Archives, RG 59, 867.00/425, Jackson to Secretary of State, Nov. 19, 1912, encl. Jackson to Rockhill, Nov. 19, 1912.

Turkish nationalists were galvanized by the ideology of Turkism and policies aimed at Turkification of all cultures within the empire. Hostility toward non-Muslims was exacerbated by the mass influx of Muslim refugees (*muhajirs*) after the Russian-Turkish War of 1877-78 and the further loss of territories in the Balkan wars of 1912-13. The failure of the Ottoman government to implement reforms, coupled with its inability to prevent the liberation movements in the Balkans, on the one hand, and European interventionist diplomacy, on the other, escalated the repressive measures against the Armenians.

The Young Turk revolution in 1908, in reinstating the Constitution of 1876, promised to eliminate the tyrannical practices of Sultan Abdul Hamid and to institute democratic policies and practices. One of the principal leaders of the revolution against Abdul Hamid, Enver (later minister of war), proclaimed in Liberty Square in Salonika (Thessalonika): "To-day arbitrary government has disappeared. We are all brothers. There are no longer in Turkey Bulgarians, Greeks, Servians [Serbians], Rumanians, Mussulmans, Jews. Under the same blue sky we are all proud to be Ottomans."¹¹ Some observers found such declarations less than credible. The journalist William Morton Fullerton, a correspondent for the London *Times*, commented in 1913 that the European consuls in the Ottoman Empire were "duped by this eloquence and their enthusiasm duped their Governments." Fullerton added prophetically: "After 1908, for a wonderful period of eighteen months the Turkish task-master seemed to have been transformed into a comrade. In this new role, however, the Turk made but a fleeting appearance. He vanished into the wings and came forth in the garb of an executioner."¹²

For Armenians, the enthusiasm and optimism generated by the revolution proved short lived. The massacres in 1909 in Adana and other parts of the Cilician region, claiming more than 20,000 Armenian lives, clearly indicated the inability or even unwillingness on the part of the government to protect Armenians. It also led many Armenians and their two leading political parties, the Hnchakian and the Armenian Revolutionary Federa-

¹¹ Quoted in William Morton Fullerton, *Problems of Power: A Study of International Politics from Sadowa to Kirk-Kilissé* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1913), p. 134.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 134, 138.

tion (Dashnaktsutjun), to make sporadic attempts to organize for self-defense (as in Shabin-Karahisar, Van, and Kesaria) in case of future massacres.¹³ By 1913, Turkish hostility countenanced by the government had heightened the Armenian sense of insecurity in Kesaria, as Turkish thugs repeatedly attacked Armenian homes, workshops, and women and did their best to enforce a boycott of Armenian businesses.¹⁴

The Road to Genocide

For centuries, Kesaria's location as a center of commerce had proved enormously beneficial financially and had enhanced its economic status in the region. According to Vital Cuinet, in 1890, that is prior to Kesaria's economic decline, the total value of goods exported from the sanjak reached about 650,000 Ottoman gold liras (or 15 million francs).¹⁵ Many Armenian inhabitants in the region achieved a prosperous standard of living, which gave rise to growing local Turkish resentment toward the Armenian community and suspicions of Armenian collusion with Western powers. Beginning in the middle of the 1890s, however, the city of Kesaria experienced economic decline largely as a result of the global economic downturn and the lack of competitive market advantages. Economic decay, combined with military failures, could not augur well for the Armenian population.

Economic relations between Turks and Armenians, operating in an environment of imperial decline, rapidly deteriorated soon after the Young Turk revolution. The relatively more liberal party of *Hurriyet ve Itilaf* (Freedom and Accord) not only failed to consolidate democratization under the restored Constitution but was also unable to reverse the process of imperial decline and suffered territorial losses, as in the Turkish-Italian war of 1911 and the Balkan wars of 1912-13. Losses on the battlefield

¹³ Alpayachian, *Patmutiun Hay Kesario*, vol. 2, pp. 1352-88, 1401-07; Clara Childs Richmond, "The Turkish Atrocities," in *"Turkish Atrocities": Statements of American Missionaries on the Destruction of Christian Communities in Ottoman Turkey, 1915-1917*, comp. James L. Barton (reprinted, Ann Arbor, MI: Gomidas Institute, 1998), p. 121.

¹⁴ Alpayachian, *Patmutiun Hay Kesario*, vol. 2, pp. 1433-41.

¹⁵ Vital Cuinet, *La Turquie d'Asie*, 4 vols. (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1890-1895), vol. 1, p. 315.

heightened the vulnerability of the party to increasingly vocal criticism, and in January 1913 the extremely nationalist wing of the Young Turk Ittihad ve Terakki Jemiyeti (Committee of Union and Progress; CUP) orchestrated a military coup to remove the Hurriyet ve Itilaf from power. The Ittihadist dictatorial regime under Minister of Interior Talaat, Minister of War Enver, and Minister of the Marine and Commander of Fourth Army Jemal, ruled until late 1918. They deeply resented Western geopolitical and financial designs concerning their country and considered Turkish reliance on Germany necessary for military and economic modernization and support.

Germany, for its part, directed its attention to the Ottoman Empire predicated upon the doctrine of *Drang nach Osten* (Striving toward the East) which, true to its major power status, placed a premium on geo-economic considerations with little regard for humanitarian concerns.¹⁶ When addressing the Armenian reform project proposed by Russia in 1913, Secretary of State of the Foreign Office Gottlieb von Jagow instructed Ambassador Hans von Wangenheim in Constantinople to avoid becoming too heavily involved in "Armenian matters," even though, as Jagow noted, Germany, under Article 61 of the 1878 Treaty of Berlin, had assumed a responsibility to encourage the Ottoman government to introduce the promised reforms, which would distance the Armenians from looking to Russia for support.¹⁷

Repeated failures by the Ottoman government to implement reforms compelled Armenians to rely on major powers for political support, which created yet another opportunity for foreign intervention, as demonstrated by the Russian-sponsored reform agreement of February 8, 1914. Signed by Said Halim Pasha, the Ottoman Grand Vizier and Foreign Minister, and Konstantin N. Gulkevich, the Russian Chargé d'Affaires in Constantinople, this agreement provided for the creation of two "Armenian provinces" —one encompassing the Trebizond, Sivas, and Erzerum

¹⁶ See Ulrich Trumppener, *Germany and the Ottoman Empire, 1914-1918* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968).

¹⁷ DE/PA-AA/R14078, Secretary of State of the Foreign Office (Jagow) to the Ambassador in Constantinople (Wangenheim), Directive, Berlin, April 22, 1913, trans. Vera Draack, in *A Documentation of the Armenian Genocide in World War I*, ed. Wolfgang and Sigrid Gust, available at www.armenocide.net, cited hereinafter as Gust, *Documentation*.

vilayets, and the other, Van, Bitlis, Kharpert, and Diarbekir—each province to be supervised by a European inspector-general.¹⁸ The Young Turk leaders would not tolerate such a plan for long, although initially they concealed their resentment toward foreign intervention of such magnitude. As Fullerton has noted, the Committee of Union and Progress was “formed and developed not merely against the Hamidian regime but against a meddlesome Europe.”¹⁹ It was extremely naïve or optimistic to expect the ultranationalist Ittihadist government to implement reforms requiring concessions of such weight. Jemal Pasha commented in his memoirs: “Just as it was our chief aim to annul the Capitulations [concessions to European powers]. . . , so in the matter of Armenian reform we desired to release ourselves from the Agreement which Russian pressure had imposed upon us.”²⁰

The Ittihadist ideology of Turkism, pan-Turkism, and Turkification incited Turks and Kurds to view the Armenians as the mortal enemy in the Turkish heartland. Encouraged by the government, local Turks imposed an informal boycott on Armenian commerce in several communities.²¹ After the Ittihadist military coup in January 1913, the state ideology of ultranationalism legitimized Turkish and Kurdish hostility and even mass violence toward the Armenian population in markets and politics, as demonstrated by the advertisements which appeared in newspapers urging Muslims to boycott Armenian merchants.²² In certain

¹⁸ Great Britain, FO 43989/19208/13/44, Marling to Grey, Sept. 26, 1913, in *British Documents on the Origins of the War, 1898-1914*, vol. 10, pt. 1: *The Near and Middle East on the Eve of War*, ed. G.P. Gooch and Harold Temperley (London: H.M.S.O., 1936), p. 517.

¹⁹ Fullerton, *Problems of Power*, p. 134.

²⁰ Djemal Pasha, *Memoires of a Turkish Statesman, 1913-1919* (New York: George H. Doran, 1922), p. 276.

²¹ Alpayachian, *Patmutiun Hay Kesario*, vol. 2, p. 1480; Zaven Der Yeghiayan, *My Patriarchal Memoirs*, trans. Ared Misirliyan and annotated Vatche Ghazarian (Barrington, RI: Mayreni Publishing, 2002), p. 26 (Armenian original, Cairo: Nor Astgh, 1947); Elizabeth B. Frierson, “Cheap and Easy: The Creation of Consumer Culture in Late Ottoman Society,” in *Consumption Studies and the History of the Ottoman Empire, 1550-1922*, ed. Donald Quataert (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2000), p. 255.

²² Müftüzâde Şeref (Uluğ), “Ermeniler,” *Türk* 110 (Dec. 21, 1905) (Cairo), p. 2, as quoted in M. Şükrü Hanioglu, *Preparation for a Revolution: The Young Turks, 1902-1908* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 69. See also Uğur Ümit Üngör, *The Making of Modern Turkey: Nation and State in Eastern Anatolia*,

areas, local Turks, resorting to violence, set the Armenian markets on fire in Diarbekir and the Armenian quarter in Edirne (Adrianople) on August 6 and 13, 1914, respectively.²³

Yet, Armenians expected the February Reform Act to introduce fundamental structural changes in the Armenian provinces. They remained cautiously optimistic that the promised administrative reforms would eventually ease Turko-Armenian tensions.²⁴ Indeed, there were signs of improvement, as when on March 14, 1914, with the blessings of local Ittihadists, Professor Garabed Tumayan of Kesaria was elected deputy to the Ottoman Parliament.²⁵ This election, however, represented the final phase of any semblance of political, constitutional normalcy, for the outbreak of World War I on July 28, 1914, rendered all such expectations illusory. The war provided an opportunity to liquidate the Armenian population and to seize their businesses and properties.²⁶

The Young Turk regime issued orders for the *seferberlik* (general mobilization) in July 1914 in preparation for the war, which rapidly altered the political and economic environment in the Ottoman Empire. The general mobilization for the war represented the first step toward the formulation of what eventually became the genocidal policies of the Young Turks. The Ittihadist leaders designated the Teshkilat-i Mahsusa (Special Organization), headed by the small clique headed by members of the Young Turk Central Committee, Behaeddin Shakir, Nazim, Riza, and Atif, in cooperation with the Ministry of War under Enver, as the agency responsible for the implementation of the

1913-1950 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 47; Frierson, "Cheap and Easy," p. 255.

²³ Der Yeghiayan, *My Patriarchal Memoirs*, p. 46; Simon Payaslian, "The Armenian Genocide in Diarbekir, 1915," in *Armenian Tigranakert/Diarbekir and Edessa/Urfa*, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 2006), pp. 285-307.

²⁴ Simon Vratsian, *Hayastani Hanrapetutium* [Republic of Armenia] (Paris: A.R.F. Central Committee of America, 1928; repr., Erevan: Hayastan, 1993), pp. 5-6; Richard G. Hovannisian, "The Armenian Question in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1914," in Hovannisian, *Armenian People*, vol. 2, p. 237.

²⁵ Alpayachian, *Patmutiun Hay Kesario*, vol. 2, p. 1435. See also Raymond H. Kévorkian, *Le Génocide des Arméniens* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 2006), p. 641.

²⁶ Alpayachian, *Patmutiun Hay Kesario*, vol. 2, pp. 1436-37; Taner Akçam, *A Shameful Act: The Armenian Genocide and the Question of Turkish Responsibility*, trans. Paul Bessemer (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2006), pp. 189-91.

genocidal policies of massacres and deportations.²⁷ The Ittihadists ordered local authorities to commence the disarmament of the Armenians across the empire, and their repressive measures intensified. Immediately after Turkey openly entered the war on the side of Germany at the end of October, Armenian soldiers in the region of Kesaria were disarmed and placed in labor battalions.

Devastating military defeats further exacerbated Turkish—government and public—hostility towards the Armenian people, particularly in the regions bordering with Russia, where local Armenians were suspected of collusion with advancing Russian enemy troops. The disastrous military campaigns, one led by Enver against Russia at Sarikamish in December 1914 and January 1915, and the second by Jemal in the battle for the Sinai Peninsula and the Suez Canal in the closing days of January 1915, followed by the Gallipoli campaign by the Allied Powers launched soon thereafter, heightened the sense of urgency among the Ittihadist leaders to ensure control over, and in extreme cases the elimination of, internal threats. Upon Enver Pasha's return to Constantinople from the Sarikamish front, the Young Turk leadership met on February 14, 1915, and, claiming that the Armenians were engaged in pro-Russian military and anti-Turkish revolutionary activities, began to organize the deportation of the Armenians across the empire. Talaat, for example, reportedly believed that the Turkish losses at Sarikamish and Van were caused by Armenian volunteers and not the Russian army.²⁸

The Ottoman military considered Kesaria an area of vital strategic significance; in its evaluation of the situation, the Third Army maintained that while Van, Bitlis, Erzerum, and Shabin-Karahisar represented the principal "centers of upheaval," Sivas, Kesaria, and Diarbekir were potential areas for similar turbulence, as Armenians, according to the Ottoman army, were amassing enormous quantities of weapons. Considering the

²⁷ Vartkes Yeghiayan, ed. and comp., *The Armenian Genocide and the Trials of the Young Turks* (La Verne, CA: American Armenian International College Press, 1990), pp. 95-96.

²⁸ Library of Congress, Division of Manuscripts, Papers of Henry Morgenthau, Sr., Diary, July 10, 1915.

situation from the military perspective, "it can easily be seen that all were located 'on the main points of the range borders'."²⁹

In the town of Everek (Evereg), which along with adjoining Fenese and its environs was home to about 8,300 Armenians prior to World War I,³⁰ an explosion of a homemade bomb on February 11, 1915 (by the Julian calendar then in use in the Ottoman Empire or February 24 by the Gregorian calendar in use in the West) at the house of an Armenian, Kevork Poshayan, who had recently returned from the United States, alarmed the authorities and spread fear throughout the Armenian communities in Everek and the entire region of Kesaria. According to Ambassador Wangenheim, Patriarch Zaven Der Yeghiayan had stated:

One Armenian who had returned from America and settled in Everek near Caesarea, began to take an active part in their production, and after he had finished three of them, had an accident with the fourth one; the three finished bombs were hidden by his fellow people, but were discovered by the police, who by chance had heard about the matter. Upon further investigation, 24 empty, not yet loaded shells were brought to light under the tiled roof of the local Armenian church. This happened at the beginning of February. Since then, even more findings of bombs appear to have been made; the Minister of the Interior recently quoted the number of bombs found in Caesarea as being 400; also some had been found in Diyarbekir and sent to Van to be used there by the rebels.³¹

²⁹ ATASE, Birinci Dünya Harbi Koleksiyonu (BDH), Klâsör (File) 528, Eski Dosya (Old Folder) 1029, Yeni Dosya (New Folder) 2061, Fihrist (Index) 21(1-18), vol. 1, pp. 5, 9, 111, 113.

³⁰ Kévorkian, *Le Génocide des Arméniens*, p. 648.

³¹ DE/PA-AA/R14085, Ambassador in Constantinople (Wangenheim) to the Reichskanzler (Bethmann Hollweg), report, no. 286, May 8, 1915, trans. Linda Struck, in Gust, *Documentation*; see also DE/PA-AA/R14086, Ambassador in Constantinople (Wangenheim) to the Reichskanzler (Bethmann Hollweg), report no. 443, July 13, 1915, trans. Vera Draack, in Gust, *Documentation*.

Interrogations and house to house searches followed,³² but dissatisfied with their results, the Young Turk government considered the local authorities incompetent and, to ensure effective implementation of their policies, appointed the virulently anti-Armenian Salih Zeki Bey as the new *kaymakam* (district governor) of the *kaza* (district) of Develu or Develi and who also served as the interim commander of the 15th Division headquartered at Kesaria. Two of the principal authorities in the region of Kesaria, *kaymakam* Salih Zeki and Ahmed Midhat, the *mutessarif* (county governor) of Kesaria sanjak, were among local officials largely responsible for the persecutions and arrests, deportations, and murder of thousands of local Armenians.³³ Salih Zeki later became the *mutessarif* of Deir el-Zor and one of the principal organizers of the massacres in the area.³⁴ While in Aleppo, in a conversation Agyah Bey, a former correspondent for the Constantinople newspaper *Tavsiri Efkar*, had inquired of Salih Zeki regarding the veracity of circulating rumors that he had annihilated 10,000 Armenians. Salih Zeki reportedly replied: "I have pride; what is 10,000? Raise your figure."³⁵

The investigations into the explosion in Everek led to the imprisonment of thirty-six Armenians on charges of disloyalty and treason; they were sent to appear before the court martial at Kesaria.³⁶ Fearful of further persecution, several Armenians in Kesaria informed the authorities about the locations of hidden

³² Alpayachian, *Patmutiun Hay Kesario*, vol. 1, pp. 828-29, vol. 2, p. 1407; Kévorkian, *Le Génocide des Arméniens*, p. 642. In his report to the CUP Annual Meeting in September 1916, Talaat named Kevork Hampartzumian as the Armenian responsible for the explosion. See U.S. National Archives, RG 59, 867.00/791, Elkus to Secretary of State, Oct. 14, 1916, encl., "Translation of a Report Read on Behalf of the General Council of the Party of Union and Progress at the First Session of Its Annual Meeting," *Hilal*, Sept. 29-30, 1916, p. 13. Garabed Kalfayan mentions Kevork Tefchian in his *Girk Elits Hayots* (Beirut: Donigian, 1955), p. 149.

³³ Kévorkian, *Le Génocide des Arméniens*, p. 642.

³⁴ Levon Chormislian, *Hamapatker Arevmtahayots mek daru patmutian* [A Panorama of One Century of Western Armenian History], vol. 3 (Beirut: Sevan, 1975), p. 362; Vartkes Yeghiayan, ed. and comp., *British Foreign Office Dossiers on Turkish War Criminals* (La Verne, CA: American Armenian International College, 1991), p. 70.

³⁵ Yeghiayan, *Armenian Genocide*, pp. 16-17.

³⁶ Kévorkian, *Le Génocide des Arméniens*, p. 642; Chormislian, *Hamapatker*, vol. 3, p. 362.

weapons, which beginning in late February led to the arrest of a number of community leaders and clergy in Kesaria, among them Fathers Garabed Melikian, Hagop Der Harutiunian, Mkhitari Tamezian, and, in Fenese, Fathers Eghishe Asdvadzadurian and Ghevont Tayian. Many died in prison, while others were deported to the Syrian desert in July 1915. Armenian community leaders in the towns of Chomakhlu and Tomarza became the targets of intense persecution and hostility as well, since two individuals, Mihran Elikyuzian and Avedis Ekizian, who cooperated with Poshayan in Everek were from Chomakhlu. Also in February, the authorities arrested 400 Armenians in Tomarza, who after repeated torture were transferred to a prison in Kesaria.³⁷

U.S. Ambassador Henry Morgenthau noted in his diary that according to a visitor from Everek, authorities had found 80 bombs in Everek and 200 in Kesaria in addition to 300 pounds of lead and large quantities of powder. The government had reacted harshly, Morgenthau commented; Turkish children at schools "were taught to revenge," while "the kaymakam of Everek ordered ten Armenians killed without trial." Moreover, Armenians were required to surrender their weapons, while Muslims could retain theirs. "Some Armenians had their legs amputated from the wounds resulting from torture."³⁸

By the spring of 1915, some observers in Kesaria sanjak expected persecutions of and mass atrocities toward Armenians to escalate even further. According to Stella Loughridge, an American missionary stationed in Kesaria, more than one Turkish official intimidated to her that Armenians would be subjected to "the most extreme atrocities."³⁹ The vali of Kesaria reportedly confided to her that "not an Armenian was to be left" in the sanjak. Similarly, the former member of the Ottoman Parliament from Kesaria, Ali Ghalib Bey, stated to her that "there was no hope for the Armenians" and that "the only way to save our Armenian friends was to advise them to become Moslems." An-

³⁷ Alpayachian, *Patmutiun Hay Kesario*, vol. 1, pp. 829-30, 844, 865.

³⁸ Morgenthau Papers, Diary, July 3, 1915.

³⁹ Stella Loughridge, "Facts in Regard to Armenian Atrocities in the Cesarea District, Asia Minor," in Barton, *Turkish Atrocities*, p. 116. This document was published under the name of Stella H. Longbridge (see p. 117).

other Turkish official, Ali Sabri Bey, warned her that “something terrible was to happen to our school girls and boys.”⁴⁰

Wholesale persecution of Armenians in Kesaria and its environs commenced in April 1915. Authorities first launched large-scale searches for weapons and published material in Armenian establishments (for example, offices of political parties, schools, and churches) and arrested the leaders of Armenian political parties and known activists, followed by teachers, the clergy, and businessmen. Those imprisoned were subjected to torture and handed over to the court martial.⁴¹ In response, Patriarch Der Yeghiayan and a small number of prominent Armenians in Constantinople (including Senator Zareh Dilber and Deputies Krikor Zohrab, Vartkes Serengulian, Harutium Boshgezenian, and Hovsep Madatian) held an emergency meeting on April 23, 1915, and decided to convey to the Sublime Porte their concerns regarding the gravity of the situation in Kesaria, Zeitun, Van, and other places. They endeavored to convince the Ottoman authorities of the loyalty of the Armenian communities “in order to clear” the government’s “baseless suspicions” toward the Armenian millet—but to no avail.⁴²

In late April, Ambassador Wangenheim reported to Berlin that “the government had now decided to put an end to the present situation whereby each religious community made its own special ‘politics’ and could found and maintain special political associations for this purpose. In Turkey, only one ‘Ottoman policy’ was to be pursued in [the] future.” He added that the Ottoman government, particularly Minister of Interior Talaat, considered a number of Armenian political associations and community leaders as a threat, especially in case of an unfavorable turn in the war.⁴³ In fact, in a memorandum, dated April 24, 1915, to the office of the Ottoman Commander in Chief, Talaat expressed his suspicions regarding Armenian organizations and leaders. He noted that not only bombs were discovered but that

⁴⁰ Loughridge, “Facts,” p. 116.

⁴¹ Alpoyachian, *Patmutium Hay Kesario*, vol. 2, pp. 1407-09; Kévorkian, *Le Génocide des Arméniens*, p. 642; Clara Childs Richmond, “The Turkish Atrocities,” in Barton, “*Turkish Atrocities*,” p. 121.

⁴² Der Yeghiayan, *My Patriarchal Memoirs*, pp. 62-63.

⁴³ DE/PA-AA/R14085, No. 267, Ambassador in Constantinople (Wangenheim) to the Reichskanzler (Bethmann Hollweg), April 30, 1915, trans. Linda Struck, in Gust, *Documentation*.

the Ottoman Armenians had sided with the Russians as directed by their organizational leadership in Europe. The revolutionaries, gathered at Kesaria, Sivas, and other areas, were prepared "to incite upheavals" behind the Ottoman army. Accordingly, Talaat instructed the headquarters of the commander-in-chief to issue all necessary orders to effectuate the arrests and exile of all Armenians who were identified as opposing the Ottoman state.⁴⁴

Deportations and Massacres:

"Alongside the Dry Wood, the Green Wood also Burns"

Most Armenians in Kesaria were not politically active, but they were unable to escape the persecutions, massacres, and deportations unfolding in the region. Official and public hostilities toward the Armenians further intensified during the month of May. In early May, the authorities ordered house-to-house searches for weapons and subsequently released hardcore criminals from prisons for the express purpose of implementing the searches, followed by pillage and plunder throughout the Armenian neighborhoods in Kesaria as well as the Armenian communities across the eastern provinces.⁴⁵ In the meantime, although the authorities demanded that Muslims and non-Muslims surrender their weapons, it was clear that only Christians were expected to comply with the order. The Ministry of Interior dispatched several secret directives to the authorities in Kesaria concerning a range of issues, including instructions to record in detail the names of the villages to be emptied of the Armenian inhabitants, the number of deported Armenians, and their destinations.⁴⁶

Armenians in increasing numbers with no record of political involvement were arrested, some were deported or condemned to hard labor for ten to fifteen years, and others were hanged. The authorities ordered several executions of Armenian community leaders in Kesaria on charges of sedition and separatist activities. The Armenian Prelate of Kesaria, Bishop Khosrov Behrigian, was arrested, handed to the military courts in Kesaria, and temporarily placed under house arrest. During the second half of May, 200 Armenians were arrested in Kesaria (and approximately the same

⁴⁴ Talaat to the Ottoman Army Commander-in-Chief, April 24, 1915, ATASE, pp. 127-29.

⁴⁵ Richmond, "Turkish Atrocities," pp. 121-22.

⁴⁶ Alpayachian, *Patmutiun Hay Kesario*, vol. 2, pp. 1441-43, 1453.

number in Yozghat).⁴⁷ Accusations of possession of weapons and collusion with revolutionary movements and with the enemy served to demonize the Armenian population in Kesaria as well as across the empire.⁴⁸

On May 24, 1915, the Entente (Allied) Powers issued a public condemnation of the deportations and massacres committed by the Turkish government against the Armenians, and declared that they "will hold personally responsible [for] these crimes all members of the Ottoman Government and those of their agents who are implicated in such massacres."⁴⁹ Such declarations of condemnation, however, failed to deter the Young Turks from pursuing their policy of annihilation. Rather, on May 29, the CUP adopted the Temporary Law of Deportation, authorizing the military to oversee the wholesale deportation of the Armenian population.⁵⁰ The primary object of the law might have been to accord legal legitimacy to a policy already being implemented since November 1914.⁵¹ The central government also formed the Commission on Abandoned Property for the purpose

⁴⁷ Johannes Lepsius, *Rapport Secret sur les Massacres d'Arménie* (Beirut: Hamaskaine, 1980; first published, Paris: Payot, 1918), p. 45; Asatur H. Makarian, "Ampop hamaynapatker" [Concise Overview], in *Hushamatian Mets Egherni, 1915-1965* [Memorial Volume of the Great Crime, 1915-1965], ed. and comp. Gersam Aharonian (Beirut: Atlas, 1965), p. 309.

⁴⁸ Kévorkian, *Le Génocide des Arméniens*, p. 648.

⁴⁹ Archives du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères (A.M.A.E.), Guerre 1914-1918, *Turquie*, "Communication de l'Ambassade de Russie au Département," May 11, 1915, "Communication de l'Ambassade de Grande-Bretagne au Département," May 19, 1915, "Communication de l'Ambassade de Grande-Bretagne au Département," May 21, 1915, "Note du Département à l'Agence Havas," May 24, 1915, and M. William Sharp, Ambassadeur des États-Unis à Paris, à M. Delcassé, Ministre des Affaires Étrangères, May 28, 1915, in *Les grandes puissances l'empire ottoman et les arméniens dans les archives françaises (1914-1918)*, ed. and comp., Arthur Beylerian (Paris: Panthéon-Sorbonne, 1983), pp. 23, 25-29, 31; U.S. National Archives, RG 59, 867.4016/67, Sharp to Secretary of State, May 28, 1915; RG 59, 867.4016/67, Secretary of State Bryan to American Embassy, Constantinople, May 29, 1915.

⁵⁰ Vahakn N. Dadrian, *The History of the Armenian Genocide: Ethnic Conflict from the Balkans to Anatolia to the Caucasus* (Providence: Berghahn Books, 1995), pp. 221-22. The postwar Ottoman Parliament repealed the Temporary Law of Deportation on November 4, 1918.

⁵¹ Christopher J. Walker, "World War I and the Armenian Genocide," in Hovannisian, *Armenian People*, vol. 2, pp. 252-53.

of confiscating properties left behind by the deported Armenians and those soon to be deported.⁵²

Mass arrests and executions escalated in the month of June. A secret directive ordered that after the deportation of Armenians, the arriving Muslim refugee muhajirs be permitted to occupy their towns and schools. The Committee on Abandoned Properties and the Committee for the Settlement of Muhajirs were charged with the duty to facilitate the smooth transition of the muhajirs into a normalcy of life.⁵³ On June 1/14, 1915, on the same day that twenty members of the Hnchakian party were hanged at the Bayazid square in Constantinople, eleven Armenians were condemned to a similar fate at the Komur Bazar square in Kesaria on the charge of participation in rebellious activities.⁵⁴ Included among them were Dashnak and Hnchak activists, but also individuals not affiliated with any political organization or activity—for example, the prominent businessman Garabed Chamchian and banker Hagop Merdinian.⁵⁵ The local court martial condemned more than fifty Armenians to death; eight prisoners brought from Everek were sent to the gallows in Kesaria in the early morning hours of July 24, 1915, as were, on August 12, two other Armenians, one of them being Hampartzum Boyajian, a member of the Ottoman Parliament and leader of the Hnchakian party. This was followed by the execution of fifteen community leaders on August 13.⁵⁶

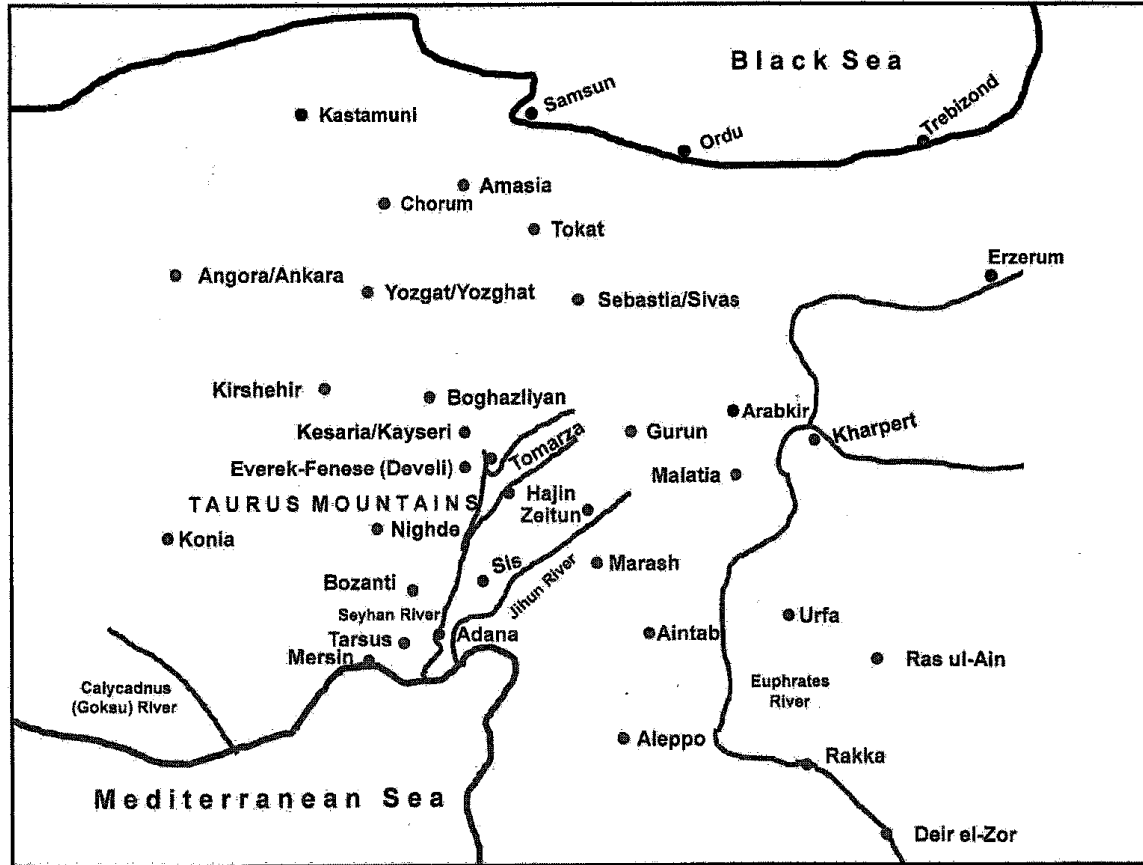
⁵² Henry H. Riggs, *Days of Tragedy in Armenia: Personal Experiences in Harpoot, 1915-1917* (Ann Arbor: Gomidas Institute, 1997), p. 92.

⁵³ Alpayachian, *Patmutiun Hay Kesario*, vol. 2, pp. 1455-56.

⁵⁴ Morgenthau Papers, Diary, June 15, 1915; U.S. National Archives, RG 59, 867.4016/70, Morgenthau to Secretary of State, June 18, 1915; Der Yeghiayan, *My Patriarchal Memoirs*, pp. 59, 86; A.N. Mnatsakanyan, "Hay zhoghovrdi Mets Egherne ev azgayin veratsnunde" [The Great Calamity of the Armenian People and the National Revival]; V. Kesaratzi, "Kesario ev shrjakayits arian turke hayots Mets Eghernin" [The Blood Debt of Kesaria and Its Region to the Armenian Great Calamity], in *Hushamatian Mets Egherni*, pp. 41, 350-51; Chormisian, *Hamapatker*, vol. 3, pp. 362-63; Richmond, "Turkish Atrocities," p. 122. Lepsius incorrectly gives June 13 as the date (*Rapport secret*, p. 165). Alpayachian gives June 2/15 (*Patmutiun Hay Kesario*, vol. 2, p. 1447).

⁵⁵ Alpayachian, *Patmutiun Hay Kesario*, vol. 2, pp. 1412-16; Kévorkian, *Le Génocide des Arméniens*, pp. 644-45.

⁵⁶ Chormisian, *Hamapatker*, vol. 3, p. 363; Der Yeghiayan, *My Patriarchal Memoirs*, p. 94; Kévorkian, *Le Génocide des Arméniens*, pp. 644-45.



Sites of Deportation

Bishop Behrigian, charged with conspiracy to favor Russian support for a military liberation of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, was also condemned to death along with the above-mentioned fifty Armenians. Following his sentence, however, he was spared from execution—perhaps as a result of Ambassador Morgenthau's intervention at the urging of the Patriarch Der Yeghiayan, to obtain the sultan's pardon. Behrigian was instead exiled to Aleppo on August 26 but all were murdered on the road.⁵⁷ Subsequently, until the end of September, the military tribunal in Kesaria continued the trials of nearly 1,100 Armenians on the false accusations of hostile acts toward the Ottoman state and ordered all of the accused deported to Diarbekir and Aleppo. Seventeen caravans comprised of those charged with such crimes were forced out of Kesaria, the executions continuing until December 16, 1915.⁵⁸

On Sunday, June 13, 1915, a day before the hanging of eleven Armenians, the authorities arrested nearly forty prominent Armenians in the affluent town of Talas, transferred them to the prison in Kesaria, and subsequently deported them to Gemerek, where they were believed to have been murdered.⁵⁹ A week later, about eighty-five imprisoned Armenians were forced to march out of the city of Kesaria toward Bozanti and Aleppo. The exile of Armenians in small groups continued until October 19.⁶⁰

On July 10, 1915, while the wholesale deportations and massacres were engulfing the Armenian communities across the empire, Patriarch Zaven visited Grand Vizier Said Halim to urge him to refrain from punishing the Armenian women and children for the revolutionary deeds by a small minority. The vizier refused to heed such entreaties and maintained that the authorities were determined to remove the Armenians as a "precautionary measure" and as punishment for Armenian collaboration with

⁵⁷ Morgenthau Papers, Diary, July 30, 1915; Der Yeghiayan, *My Patriarchal Memoirs*, p. 82; Kévorkian, *Le Génocide des Arméniens*, p. 645.

⁵⁸ Alpayachian, *Patmutiun Hay Kesario*, vol. 2, pp. 1420-22; Kévorkian, *Le Génocide des Arméniens*, pp. 643-44; Chormisian, *Hamapatker*, vol. 3, pp. 362-63.

⁵⁹ Richmond, "Turkish Atrocities," pp. 121-22; Kévorkian, *Le Génocide des Arméniens*, p. 647.

⁶⁰ Theda B. Phelps, "Story of Talas, 1914-17," in Barton, "Turkish Atrocities," pp. 133-36.

Russia and Britain.⁶¹ The patriarch insisted that “an entire nation should not be punished for the crimes and mistakes of a few persons. Said Halim responded: “The wound was going to explode, and now it did. Moreover, there is a well-known saying: ‘Alongside the dry [wood], the green [wood] also burns.’ Unfortunately, that is what is happening this time.”⁶²

While most Ottoman officials for various reasons, including fear of retaliation and death, complied with the orders received from the Ittihadist leaders, some refused to be associated with policies of exile and murder of innocent people. On July 10, 1915, Colonel Halil Rejayi Bey, commander of the V Army Corps headquartered at Angora, sent urgent orders to the commander of the 15th Army Division Shehabeddin Bey at Kesaria to put down any acts of rebellion. Apparently exasperated by the lack of sufficient cooperation at the local level, Rejayi demanded an immediate response about the measures implemented to that effect.⁶³ The vali of the vilayet of Angora, Hasan Mazhar Bey, at first sought to convince the ruling party that the Armenians within his jurisdiction had been loyal and that therefore no such measures were necessary. Mazhar Bey was soon removed from office on instructions from Senator Atif Bey, who was well known for his hostility toward Armenians and who himself replaced Mazhar Bey as governor.⁶⁴

Similarly, when the mutessarif of Yozghat sanjak, Jemal Bey (not to be confused with Ahmed Jemal Pasha of the Ittihadist

⁶¹ Der Yeghiayan, *My Patriarchal Memoirs*, pp. 77-79; Morgenthau Papers, Diary, July 11, 1915.

⁶² Der Yeghiayan, *My Patriarchal Memoirs*, p. 78.

⁶³ Krieger, *Yozghat*, pp. 142-43.

⁶⁴ Soon after assuming power, Atif and his fanatical Ittihadist cohorts launched a campaign of disarmament ostensibly applicable to all residents of the vilayet but in fact imposed on Armenians. This was followed, in late July, by arrest of Armenian intellectual, business, and political leaders and the release of criminals from prisons to physically destroy the Armenian communities. Grigoris Palakian, *Hay goghotan* [The Armenian Golgotha] (Vienna: Mekhitarist Press, 1922), vol. 1, pp. 167-68. This Atif Bey was a senator from Angora vilayet, not to be confused with Atif Bey of the Teshkilat-i Mahsusa who was tried at the postwar courts martial in 1919. See A.H. Papazyan, *Hayeri Tséghaspanutyune est Eritturkeri datavarutyán pastatughteri* [The Armenian Genocide according to the Documents of the Trials of the Young Turks] (Erevan: Armenian Academy of Sciences, 1988), pp. 15, 102, 189n84. Atif Bey's recommendation is mentioned in Papazyan, *Hayeri Tséghaspanutyune*, p. 96.

triumvirate) and Reshid Pasha, the vali of Kastamuni vilayet, refused to comply with the orders, they, too, were removed from their posts.⁶⁵ The replacement of provincial and local authorities who resisted signaled a transition from disarmament of Armenians to wholesale arrests, deportations, and massacres.⁶⁶ The general deportations across Angora vilayet started in August 1915.

The initial deportations from Kesaria had begun during the first week of June, when the first group comprised of twenty-six men was ordered to march out of the city,⁶⁷ followed by a larger group consisting of 1,000 people. A few weeks later, however, the entire Armenian population was ordered to leave. On July 13/26, notices were posted throughout the city announcing the removal within ten days of all the Armenians, with the exception of Catholics.⁶⁸ On August 5/18, the first caravan of Armenians from Kesaria began to move toward Nighde, as dictated by the public notice of July 26.⁶⁹ Among its provisions, the notice ordered the local police to seal all Armenian shops, prohibited the sale by the current occupants of furniture and movable goods, required that any such sale be supervised by local authorities, and directed the departing Armenians to prepare an inventory of the household goods being left behind and to deposit their monies at a local bank or to transfer all funds to a relative's account. The local authorities were instructed to assign guards to escort the refugees and to monitor any sales taking place en route to their destination.⁷⁰ As soon as the mass deportations commenced, however, the Armenian neighborhoods were pillaged and plundered. During the deportations, the remaining children

⁶⁵ Annette Höss, "The Trial of Perpetrators by the Turkish Military Tribunals: The Case of Yozgat," in *The Armenian Genocide: History, Politics, Ethics*, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), p. 217. Griker [Grigor Kerkerian; Krikor Gergerian], *Yosghati Hayaspanutyun vaveragrakan patmutyune* [The Documentary History of the Armenocide in Yozghat] (New York: Vosgetar, 1980). Papazyan, *Hayeri Tseghaspanutyune*, pp. 48, 102. According to Atif Bey, however, Reshid Pasha was replaced because of his age as required by a new law.

⁶⁶ Marzbed [Gazar Gazarian], *Faits et documents: quelques épisodes des événements de Césarée* (Constantinople: American Printing House, 1919).

⁶⁷ Richmond, "Turkish Atrocities," p. 121.

⁶⁸ Alpayachian, *Patmutiun Hay Kesario*, vol. 2, p. 1451.

⁶⁹ Levon Vardan, *Zhamanakagrutiun haykakan tashningi, 1915-1923* [Chronology of the Armenian Fifteen, 1915-1923] (Beirut: Atlas, 1975), p. 49.

⁷⁰ Alpayachian, *Patmutiun Hay Kesario*, vol. 2, p. 1451.

were distributed among well-to-do Muslim families where no Armenians or foreigners were present for purposes of education and training.⁷¹ Armenians in many of the villages in the vicinity of Kesaria were deported already in early July.⁷² On July 2/15, 1915, the approximately 1,700 Armenians of Chomakhlu were marched off, followed on July 3/16 and 4/17 by the Armenians of Derevenk.

Ernest Partridge, an American missionary in Sivas, who on his way to the United States visited Ambassador Morgenthau in Constantinople on July 26, informed the ambassador that in the region of Kesaria and Everek the Armenian refugees "scarcely [had] enough food for two days." It appeared obvious, Partridge added, that the orders for such decisions came from Constantinople rather than from the military. "There is little doubt that the invisible Government is responsible for this persecution."⁷³

When Patriarch Zaven went to see the Minister of Interior Talaat Pasha to plead for an end to the deportations and killings, Talaat Pasha refused to see him.⁷⁴ On June 30/July 13, the patriarch wrote with desperation to Archbishop Eghishe Turian:

One after the other, populations from Samson and Gesaria all the way to and including Dikranagerd and Edessa [Urfa] have been put on the road. The Armenian populations of Trebizond, Sepasdia, Kharpert, Paghesh, Van, and Dikranagerd, from the oldest to the youngest . . . have been driven to the deserts of Mesopotamia—from areas south of Aleppo to Mosul and Baghdad. . . . The courts-martial are everywhere and functioning mercilessly.⁷⁵

"There are many instances of beating to death," the patriarch continued, "13 people in Dikranagerd, 6 in Gesaria. . . . Some people are not delivered to the court-martial, but simply murdered on the road, their hands tied in the back. . . ."⁷⁶

In late June and early July in the region of Yozghat, located about 80 miles north of Kesaria, public announcements ordered

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 1456.

⁷² Phelps, "Story of Talas," pp. 133-36.

⁷³ Morgenthau Papers, Diary, July 26, 1915.

⁷⁴ Der Yeghiayan, *My Patriarchal Memoirs*, p. 73.

⁷⁵ Ibid., pp. 86-87, for the text of letter, dated June 30/July 13, 1915.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 86.

all Armenians to surrender their weapons ostensibly to avert revolutionary activities against the government in time of war. On July 25/August 7 mass arrests placed about 500 Armenians in prison in the town of Yozghat as Armenians were surrendering their weapons. Among those arrested were businessmen, government officials, teachers and intellectuals, and the local primate Bishop Nerses Danielian. After one night of imprisonment, on Monday, July 26,⁷⁷ they were sent to Kesaria.⁷⁸ On that same day, the Military Governor of Yozghat, Major Mehmed Salim Bey, reported the deportations to his superior in Kesaria, Shehabeddin Bey, who in turn informed his superior Rejayi at Ankara.⁷⁹ On July 27, 1915, Shehabeddin wrote: "According to the correspondence received, the first caravan of Armenians, consisting of 472 persons, including the primate, clergy, and prominent community members, were deported to Zile [in Sivas/Sebastia province] yesterday before noon under cheerful conditions."⁸⁰ Virtually all of them were murdered at Tashil Dere in the valley of Kardashlar in the vilayet of Sivas on orders from Muammer Bey, the provincial governor.⁸¹

In the city of Angora, ten Apostolic and Catholic Armenians were apprehended on July 31, 1915, and mass arrests followed. Some of the arrested were marched out of the city, and nearly all of them were slaughtered by *chete* (brigand) bands. Several local government officials, including the provincial governor, were opposed to the persecutions and the deportation orders, but as in the other provinces the local Ittihadists prevailed with the support of the central government. Beginning on August 4, 1915, criminals in increasing numbers were released from prisons, spreading panic throughout the Armenian neighborhoods. The mass deportations from the city and some of the towns in the region, as in Keskin, began on August 9. About 500 Apostolic Armenian men were forced from their homes and after walking six to seven hours were murdered. Two weeks later, a second group composed of 300 people marched to Kayash, where they

⁷⁷ Krieger, *Yozghat*, pp. 188-89.

⁷⁸ Sepuh Akuni, *Milion me hayeru jardi patmutiune* [The Story of the Massacre of a Million Armenians] (Constantinople: Hayastan, 1921), pp. 197-98.

⁷⁹ Krieger, *Yozghat*, p. 188.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 188-89.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 168.

met a similar fate. This was followed by massacres in the city of Angora, claiming the lives of an estimated 10,000 Armenians.⁸²

At first, responding affirmatively to petitions by the Papal Delegate Monsignor Angelo Maria Dolci, the authorities appeared to be willing to exempt Catholic Armenians from deportation.⁸³ On September 7, 1915, however, they, too, were ordered to leave Angora city in two groups, the first comprised of 800 people, including the clergy, and the second of 700, all of whom were forced to march toward Kesaria. The third large caravan consisted of women and children. The authorities granted exemption to those women and children who converted to Islam and were distributed among Muslim households; nearly 100 families were thus permitted to remain in Angora. By the end of September, virtually the entire Armenian population had been removed from the city. While some refugees were directed to Kesaria, most were first sent westward to Eskishehir, then continuing on the Berlin-Baghdad railway southeastwardly to Konia and Bozanti, after which they were marched to Islahiye and on to Deir el-Zor.⁸⁴ Deportations from other parts of Angora province brought hundreds of Armenian refugees toward Kesaria and nearby villages.⁸⁵

According to the prominent German missionary Johannes Lepsius and historian Levon Chormisian, at Tavlusun, a village near Kesaria, some Turkish neighbors protested the departure of the thirty Armenian families, insisting that if the Armenians were forced to leave, they would leave the village with them. The case of Tavlusun was certainly an exception. Such protests and petitions notwithstanding, the deportations and massacres

⁸² Archives du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères (A.M.A.E.), Guerre 1914-1918, *Turquie*, tome 907, folio 39 v-40, Note no. 43, MM. Robert du Gardier et Boudouy, Gardiens des Archives de l'Ambassade de France à Constantinople, à M. Delcassé, Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Péra, Sept. 11, 1915, in Beylerian, *Les grandes puissances*, pp. 64-65; Der Yeghiayan, *My Patriarchal Memoirs*, p. 95; Akuni, *Milion*, p. 186; Vardan, *Zhamanakagrutiun*, pp. 50, 53; Jean Naslian, *Les Mémoires de Mgr. Jean Naslian, Évêque de Trébizonde*, 2 vols. (Vienna: Mekhitarist Press, 1951), vol. 1, pp. 354-55. According to Lepsius, the deportations from Angora began in late July. Lepsius, *Rapport Secret*, p. 164.

⁸³ Naslian, *Mémoires*, vol. 1, p. 351.

⁸⁴ Morgenthau Papers, Diary, Sept. 3, 1915; Lepsius, *Rapport secret*, pp. 164-65; Akuni, *Milion*, pp. 186-89.

⁸⁵ Vardan, *Zhamanakagrutiun*, p. 53. According to Lepsius, the deportations from Angora began in late July. Lepsius, *Rapport secret*, pp. 164-65.

continued.⁸⁶ In late August 1915, Prelate of Bulgaria Bishop Ghevont Turian estimated that 40,000 Armenians in Kesaria were killed, deported, or forcibly converted to Islam,⁸⁷ although not all petitions for conversion to Islam were successful in preventing deportation or murder. When some Armenian women pleaded with a local official in Kesaria to permit their nursing babies to be kept with Muslim families rather than die on the road, the official reportedly rejected their petition and stated: "I do not accept even the smell of Armenians to remain here; go and set up an Armenia in the Arabian desert!"⁸⁸

By the end of 1915, nearly all of the Armenian inhabitants of Kesaria and its environs had been forcibly removed and sent to Syria, with the exception of an unknown number of women and children who were taken into Muslim households on condition of conversion to Islam. Caravans of refugees trudged on to Aleppo, Ras ul-Ain, and Deir el-Zor, many of whom did not survive.⁸⁹ Talaat Pasha reportedly sent orders to the governors and local authorities in Diarbekir, Kharpert, Urfa, and Deir el-Zor to burn the belongings of the refugees found on the roads and to bury the corpses rather than throwing them in rivers and lakes.⁹⁰

When on October 6, 1915, Patriarch Zaven met with Talaat, the interior minister maintained that the measures taken against Armenians were justified. The Ittihadist rulers greatly resented Armenian efforts to secure European intervention for reforms in Anatolia, and, Talaat added, they now had an opportunity to punish the Armenians. Referring to the deportation of Armenian women and children, the patriarch reasoned that "the government is a father, and it should punish like a father." Talaat replied: "It is not so! [The government] is sometimes a father and sometimes it is not. If a nation does not accept the government as its father and it makes the Russians its father, then the gov-

⁸⁶ Lepsius, *Rapport secret*, pp. 194-95; Chormislian, *Hamapatker*, vol. 3, p. 481.

⁸⁷ Tourian to Boghos Nubar Pasha, President of the Armenian National Delegation, Aug. 12/25, 1915, Archives du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères (A.M.A.E.), Guerre 1914-1918, *Turquie*, tome 887, ff. 226-228, in Beylerian, *Les grandes puissances*, pp. 132-34.

⁸⁸ Der Yeghiayan, *My Patriarchal Memoirs*, p. 95.

⁸⁹ Akuni, *Milion*, pp. 193-94; Chormislian, *Hamapatker*, vol. 3, pp. 480-81.

⁹⁰ Papazyan, *Hayeri Tseghaspanutyune*, p. 43.

ernment does not behave as a father." Talaat stated that "many of the prelates were *khayin*" (treasonous). The patriarch argued that one of the prelates, Bishop Behrigian of Kesaria, was condemned to death for supposedly having presided at a meeting of the Hnchakian party in Constanta, Romania: "This man does not even exchange greetings with the members of the political parties!" the patriarch maintained, and added that during the old regime, when the bishop was prelate of Mush, "the Tashnagtsagans were going to assassinate him, too, and he fled." Minister Talaat responded: "That's because he was a Henchagian!" Patriarch Der Yeghiayan made a last attempt to correct Talaat's perception: "He was a school classmate of mine. From the very beginning, he was opposed to the political parties. When I see what happened [to him], I am unable to accept all of the condemnations as just."⁹¹

A year later, in his report to the First Session of the CUP Annual Meeting in September 1916, Talaat maintained that the deportations were necessary as a military security measure in Van, Shabin-Karahisar, and other areas. Referring to the explosion in Everek, he noted that upon investigation "more than ninety bombs" and "hundreds of rifles," as well as other ammunition and revolutionary documents were discovered in the Armenian cemetery and schools.⁹²

The deportations and massacres and the atrocities witnessed at the hands of the Young Turk regime compelled some émigré Armenians to return to their homeland, if only to revenge the disappearance or murder of family members. When in 1916 the French government established the Légion d'Orient (renamed the Légion Arménienne in 1919), more than 4,000 Armenians joined the volunteer (*kamavor*) units to defeat the Ottoman mili-

⁹¹ Der Yeghiayan, *My Patriarchal Memoirs*, pp. 80-81; Morgenthau Papers, Diary, Oct. 7, 1915. Patriarch Der Yeghiayan notes in his memoirs that the Hnchakian party, during a meeting held in Constanta in early 1914, decided to assassinate Talaat. "Unfortunately," the patriarch writes, "one of those present at the meeting (I believe it was Yesayan) delivered the meeting minutes in their entirety to the Turkish government." Der Yeghiayan, *My Patriarchal Memoirs*, pp. 58-59.

⁹² U.S. National Archives, RG 59, 867.00/791, Elkus to Secretary of State, Oct. 14, 1916, encl., "Translation of a Report Read on Behalf of the General Council of the Party of Union and Progress at the First Session of Its Annual Meeting," *Hilal*, Sept. 29-30, 1916, p. 13.

tary in the Middle East. In return, the Allied Powers promised Armenians a free state in Cilicia upon concluding the war in victory. The Armenian soldiers came from several diasporan communities, including Egypt, France, and the United States.⁹³ Of the nearly 1,200 volunteers from the United States, 130 were originally from the region of Kesaria, of whom 50 were from the city of Kesaria.⁹⁴ Rather than create an Armenian state, however, the French military command dissolved the Armenian Legion in 1920 when French policy decidedly turned to favor the Kemalist Nationalist forces.⁹⁵

After the defeat of the Ottoman Empire and announcement of the Turkish terms of surrender in the Mudros Armistice in October 1918, one of the major tasks was the rescue and gathering up of the orphans. Beginning in early 1919, in Constantinople, the survivors created the Vorbakhtnam Marmin (Orphan Care Agency) and the Vorbahavak Marmin (Orphan Collection Agency). Also in Constantinople, Armenians from Kesaria established the Kesaratsineru Hayrenaktsakan Miutium (Compatriotic Union of Kesaria), which organized efforts to gather and care for the orphans throughout the region of Kesaria.⁹⁶ While the number of orphans transferred from Kesaria to Constantinople is not clear, according to one report, the first group, which arrived on May 20, 1919, consisted of 119 orphans: 50 Armenians and 69 Turks. The second group, including 124 Armenians and 96 Turks, arrived on June 10. The orphanages were subsequently moved to Syria.⁹⁷

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The survivors of the genocide continued to hope to return to their homeland after the war. At that time, thousands of Armenians did return in an attempt to rebuild their communities and to resume their shattered lives. The hostile political environment,

⁹³ Tigran H. Poyachian [Dikran H. Boyajian], *Haykakan Legeone: Patmakan hushagrutium* [The Armenian Legion: A Historical Memoir] (Watertown, MA: Baikar Press, 1965).

⁹⁴ Alpoyachian, *Patmutiun Hay Kesario*, vol. 2, pp. 1971-74.

⁹⁵ Poyachian, *Haykakan Legeone*.

⁹⁶ Der Yeghiayan, *My Patriarchal Memoirs*, p. 186; Alpoyachian, *Patmutiun Hay Kesario*, vol. 2, pp. 1975-77.

⁹⁷ Der Yeghiayan, *My Patriarchal Memoirs*, pp. 182, 185-86, 240.

however, would not grant them such opportunities, and their numbers declined in subsequent years. Of the approximately 50,000 Armenians in the sanjak of Kesaria, by April 1921 there were only about 4,000.⁹⁸ In Kesaria city, their number fell from 18,900 before the war to 2,653 in 1924,⁹⁹ 2,348 in 1926,¹⁰⁰ and 1,930 in 1928.¹⁰¹

The postwar courts martial, which included the Mazhar Inquiry Commission, investigated the massacres in the region of Yozghat and Angora vilayet (including events in Kesaria).¹⁰² During the trials in 1919, it was revealed that the deportation of the Armenians from the vilayet of Angora were not related to the military situation but rather served the political objectives of the Young Turk regime as it sought to strengthen its position in the region. The trials also confirmed that the removals from their posts of the governor of Angora vilayet, Mazhar Bey, the mutessarif of Yozghat sanjak, Jemal Bey, and the vali of Kastamuni vilayet, Reshid Pasha, were orchestrated by the Young Turk regime so as to render opposition to its genocidal policy ineffective.¹⁰³ On March 9, 1919, during the courts martial of the Young Turk leaders Lieutenant General Mustafa Nazim Pasha, president of the courts martial, commented:

These individuals, who are members of the Ittihad ve Terakki party, proceeded, by the decisions of the General Congress and the Central Committee, on the wrong path, and specifically, by exploiting the cataclysmic conditions of the World War, attempted to achieve their fanatical intentions and repellant acts expeditiously and savagely. No decent human being could concur with the actions they perpetrated.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁸ Teodik, *Amenun taretsuytse*, 1922 [Everyone's Almanac, 1922] (Constantinople: M. Hovakimian, 1922), p. 262.

⁹⁹ Surb Prkich Azgayin Hivandanots [Holy Savior National Hospital], *Endardzak taretsuyts*, 1925 [General Almanac, 1925] (Constantinople: H.M. Setian, 1925), p. 141.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., *Endardzak taretsuyts*, 1927 [General Almanac, 1927] (Constantinople: K.N. Magaschian, 1927), p. 337.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., *Endardzak taretsuyts*, 1929 [General Almanac, 1929] (Constantinople: H.M. Setian, 1929), p. 310.

¹⁰² Höss, "Trial," pp. 208-21.

¹⁰³ Papazyan, *Hayeri Tseghaspanutyune*, pp. 40, 113.

¹⁰⁴ Yeghiayan, *Armenian Genocide*, p. 22.

In its verdict issued on March 8, 1919, the court martial stated: "The accused and their defense counselors attempted to deny the liability for the crimes perpetrated and demanded to be released, but the Indictments dated May 3, 20, 22, and June 9, 10, and 25 demonstrated the true character of the dissolved Ittihad ve Terakki party and their culpability for the countless crimes in question was proven."¹⁰⁵ Contrary to the Ittihadist claims that the "deportations" were emergency wartime security measures, the Armenian community in Angora was one of the most assimilated into the Turkish culture and political system. Nor were there any military threats to the region when the deportations and massacres began there.¹⁰⁶

By the end of 1919, Mustafa Kemal's Nationalists had gained sufficient popularity and their movement sufficient momentum that they could impose their will on policymakers in Constantinople and force the termination of the trials of the perpetrators of the Armenian Genocide.¹⁰⁷ The Nationalists were determined to prevent the partition by Western powers of what they considered the Turkish heartland—which encompassed the lands of historic Armenia—and to reassert Turkish control in Constantinople and the coastal areas that the Allied Powers had occupied at the end of World War I. The Allies, for their part, sought to terminate all hostilities and therefore lacked the will to engage in further military campaigns in Turkey. Instead, they opted for amicable relations with the emerging Kemalist government at Ankara. Armenian hopes that, after years of persecution and carnage, justice would finally prevail and that they would recover from the death and destruction caused by the Young Turk regime were quashed. Armenian Kesaria was lost.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 107.

¹⁰⁶ Walker, *Armenia*, pp. 221-22.

¹⁰⁷ Höss, "Trial," pp. 208-21.



Ruins of Surb Toros and Surb Hakob Churches of Fenese